



# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

August 7, 2008

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. T. Fujioka", is written over the printed name and title.

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

## DENTAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AT MEDICAL HUBS

On April 22, 2008, your Board instructed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in consultation with the Directors of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Department of Health Services (DHS) to report back in 90 days, and quarterly thereafter, on the feasibility of including dental examinations as part of the Medical Hub screening and assessment procedures by: (1) developing public/private partnerships with the County to ensure that dental examinations for children involved in the child welfare system remain cost neutral to the County; (2) determining the availability of space at each Medical Hub to conduct dental examinations and the equipment, staffing, and other resources that can be made available to the County through the public/private partnerships; and, (3) developing an effective dental services network and referral process for follow-up dental care following a child's screening and examination at each Medical Hub.

### Background

Under existing policy, every child who comes under the supervision of DCFS is to receive a complete dental examination provided by a licensed dentist. The examination is to include a dental inspection of the teeth for signs of infection, malocclusions (improper alignment of the teeth), painful areas, inflammation of the gums, plaque deposits, and decayed or missing teeth. DCFS follows the Child Health and Disability Program guidelines/timeframes in ensuring completion of dental assessments.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"*

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In addition, Departmental policy requires that the Children Social Workers (CSWs) provide a detailed description of the child's current dental condition in the Juvenile Dependency Court's Status Review Reports. This includes a description of any current or prior dental problems, including diagnosis, treatment, and medications.

The Department tracks completed dental examinations for children in out-of-home care placements. The CSWs' responsibility is to follow up to ensure that dental needs of children are met. The CSWs work in conjunction with the Public Health Nurses (PHNs), co-located in DCFS offices, in providing assistance in medical care management of the children.

### **Medical Hubs**

Currently, dental screenings are provided at the Medical Hubs as part of the initial medical examination. If a need for dental services is identified, the Medical Hubs either: (1) provide a list of Denti-Cal providers to caregivers; (2) refer caregivers to County facilities (limited pediatric services are available at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center and Martin Luther King Jr. Multi-Service Ambulatory Care Center [MLK MACC]); or (3) refer caregivers to other providers such as the USC School of Dentistry. The need for dental services is noted on the medical reporting form returned to DCFS, and the CSWs and PHNs are responsible for ensuring that the child receives the appropriate follow-up.

The Medical Hub physicians have reported that this system generally functions well for children who have Denti-Cal coverage and do not have special needs. This group constitutes the majority of children seen at the Medical Hubs. Caregivers are generally able to access a dentist who takes Denti-Cal and to obtain dental services within a reasonable time frame. DCFS tracks whether dental visits have occurred through regular utilization reports, and provides information on dental visits for each child in Court reports submitted every six months.

Dental resources are much more limited; however, for children who do not have Denti-Cal, for those with complicated or extensive dental needs, and for those with special needs, such as a condition requiring sedation to perform dental services, DCFS and DHS recommend that efforts to provide dental services at the Medical Hubs be focused on these populations.

### **Public/Private Partnerships**

DCFS and DHS are working jointly with the CEO to develop public/private partnerships for dental services. Discussions have been initiated to identify private funding opportunities for space renovation, dental equipment, and staffing required for the

Medical Hubs to expand their services to include dental examinations. These opportunities may include donations and/or grant awards.

In addition, we are in the process of contacting local university schools of dentistry to contribute to the oral health needs of children in foster care. Discussions include the possibility of the schools of dentistry providing staff and/or students to conduct dental examinations at the Medical Hubs. Preliminary inquiries to the schools of dentistry have identified that an interest exists.

DCFS has also submitted requests for donations of toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental floss to large oral health companies, to be made available to children seen at the Medical Hubs. Responses from the companies are pending.

#### **Availability of Space at Each Medical Hub**

DCFS and DHS have conducted a review of space, staffing, and equipment that are currently available and/or would be needed to provide increased dental services at each of the Medical Hubs. Outlined below is an assessment of each Medical Hub:

- The Harbor-UCLA Medical Hub has implemented a dental clinic in the pediatric department one morning per week. Services began in June 2008, and approximately 16-20 children will be served per month;
- The LAC+USC Medical Center Hub may have space available for dental services once they relocate to the existing outpatient tower. A complete assessment of available space will be conducted when the new hospital opens in Fall 2008. However, should space be identified, additional staffing and equipment to implement dental services will be necessary. Discussions have been initiated with the USC School of Dentistry about providing these resources;
- The LAC+USC San Gabriel Valley Satellite Hub, currently under development and scheduled to open in January 2009, has two rooms which have been designated for future dental services. Work is being done to identify private funding for renovations and dental equipment, and the USC School of Dentistry has been contacted about providing staffing for the services;
- The MLK MACC Hub has available space and two dental chairs, but requires staffing and additional equipment to implement dental services. DHS and DCFS will be seeking partnerships with dental schools and other private resources to provide services at this location;

- The Olive View-UCLA and High Desert MACC Hubs have space limitations that preclude implementation of dental services in the near future. DHS is reviewing options to increase space at these Hubs and will include the need for space for dental services; and
- At Children Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA), there are staff, space for an examination room, and dental equipment. However, the availability of these services are limited because Denti-Cal funding is restricted to serve children with severe needs. CHLA has indicated an interest in partnering with the County in coordinating dental services.

### **Development of an Effective Dental Services and Referral Process**

DCFS has compiled and provided a list of dental resources to each Medical Hub. However, the list must be updated on a regular basis. Up-to-date lists of Denti-Cal providers have been requested from the six Los Angeles Component Dental Societies of the American Dental Association. DCFS has also shared information with the Medical Hubs on the availability of other community resources such as the Los Angeles Pediatric Oral Health Access Program, a joint effort between L. A. Care and First 5 LA. Through the program's pediatric dentistry training, local dentists commit to provide no cost dental treatment to children, underinsured or uninsured, five years and under.

In addition, DCFS is an active participant on the Juvenile Court's Dental Committee. The Committee, which includes representatives of numerous child advocacy organizations, is tasked with the awareness of dental resources available to serve children who are under the Court's supervision. DCFS has obtained useful information on community-based resources such as the Los Angeles Pediatric Oral Health Access Program through its participation on the Committee that is being shared with the Medical Hubs.

DCFS, DHS and the CEO will continue to work collaboratively to provide children in the County's child welfare system the dental services they need. The Departments and the CEO will keep your Board apprised of our progress on quarterly basis.

Each Supervisor  
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Please let me know if you have any questions or your staff may contact Brian Mahan at (213) 974-2396.

WTF:SRH:MS  
GP:BAM:cvb

c: County Counsel  
Department of Children and Family Services  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Department of Health Services

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